



Attracting and Retaining High Quality Teachers for California Schools

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Introduction

There are six things we want to share with you today:

1. Research shows clearly that the quality of a child's education is directly linked to the preparation of the child's teacher and the quality of the teacher's instruction. This research shows that fully prepared teachers are better able to achieve learning gains for all students.
2. The supply of teachers for California schools is going up; the primary issues now are distribution of qualified teachers for all students, and retention of credentialed teachers in the workforce.
3. Certain statewide programs and strategies are working to increase the pool of qualified teachers, and retain these teachers where they are most needed.
4. In just the last few months the Legislature and Governor have enacted significant new strategies to encourage qualified teachers to work where they are most needed; in low-performing schools. It is too early to determine the impact of these new initiatives.
5. Standards for teacher preparation must be aligned with standards for student performance, and that alignment work is underway.
6. California can do more to ensure a qualified teacher workforce. The Commission has several recommendations for your consideration.

Why Was the Commission on Teacher Credentialing Created?

The Governor and the Legislature created the Commission on Teacher Credentialing to set standards for teacher preparation, issue credentials to qualified educators, review allegations of educator misconduct, and discipline credential holders convicted of specified offenses. The Commission is comprised of 19 members --15 voting members and 4 ex-officio representatives. The Governor appoints 14 Commissioners, 1 represents the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 3 represent the higher education community, and 1 represents the California Postsecondary Education Commission. Each year, the Commission reviews approximately 110 educator programs and institutions for accreditation, licenses approximately 230,000 educators, and investigates the background, character and fitness of approximately 7,000 credential holders and applicants.

Today, we will discuss the challenges of teacher preparation in California, what the Commission is doing to make sure that California attracts and keeps the best teachers and what else can be done.

Do you remember your favorite teachers? You probably remember how they ignited your interest with their dynamic presentation and their knowledge of the subject. They knew how to



motivate students to learn. Remember how the time flew in their class, how much you learned, and how fun it was? Every child's teacher should be that kind of teacher.

What Research Tells us about the Relationship Between Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement

Research has shown that the quality of a child's education is directly linked to the preparation of the teacher and the quality of instruction. This research shows that teachers who are fully prepared--in their subject and in teaching strategies--are better able to manage a classroom and achieve learning gains for students, particularly in the high stakes accountability environment we now have in our state:

- Importantly, research shows that the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors including poverty, language or minority status.
- Scientists estimate that fully 95 percent of all children can be taught to read. Yet, in spite of all of our knowledge, statistics reveal an alarming prevalence of struggling and poor readers that is not limited to any one segment of society. Although some children will learn to read irrespective of teaching method, others never learn unless they are taught by teachers prepared to teach a systematic and explicit program of reading and writing to students.
- A New York City School study has concluded that differences in teacher qualifications, specifically educational degrees, certification status, and experience accounted for approximately 90% of the total variation in student achievement in reading and mathematics at all grade levels tested.



Problems of Supply, Demand and Distribution of Qualified Teachers in California

The need for teachers has increased 20% due to student population growth and teacher retirement and is continuing to increase. According to a study conducted by SRI International, California needs between 25,000 and 30,000 fully trained teachers annually, to keep up with growth in student population and current levels of teacher attrition.

The supply of teachers is also going up. The Commission is now issuing over 17,000 new multiple and single subject credentials each year. However, not all of these credential holders end up teaching, and without support and assistance, many leave in the beginning years.

The primary issue is one of distribution of fully prepared teachers for all students. Distribution is impacted by recruitment and selection—specifically recruiting and selecting individuals who are committed to working in hard to staff schools; preparation—preparing teachers to work in challenging schools; induction—supporting and assisting teachers so they will remain in teaching; and retention—of the people who complete teacher preparation programs, the teachers who become employed, and the individuals serving in hard to staff schools on emergency permits who are willing to become prepared.

Recent data reveals an increased movement of fully prepared teachers from poor, urban schools to schools in middle class, suburban neighborhoods. The reasons for the movement by experienced teachers away from urban schools are complex. Information to date indicates that teachers choose schools within a 25-mile radius of their homes, and where they believe they can succeed. The key factors in such success appear to be safe conditions, school level leadership, capable teaching colleagues, and adequate books and materials. Class size reduction has opened up more teaching opportunities for teachers to choose from.

It now appears that unique policy initiatives that address these distribution factors will be needed to increase the supply of prepared teachers for low-performing schools.

What Strategies are Working?

Which teacher preparation strategies are particularly effective in attracting and retaining qualified teachers for hard to staff schools?

Over the past several years, California has been building a teacher quality pipeline specifically targeted at hard to staff schools. The elements of this pipeline are the Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program, the Pre-Internship program, the District and University Internship Programs, all administered by the Commission, and the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA) jointly administered by the California Department of Education and the Commission.

- The *Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program* provides a career ladder that enables classroom aides to become teachers, with special emphasis on recruiting candidates to prepare to serve limited English speaking students and special education classrooms. The

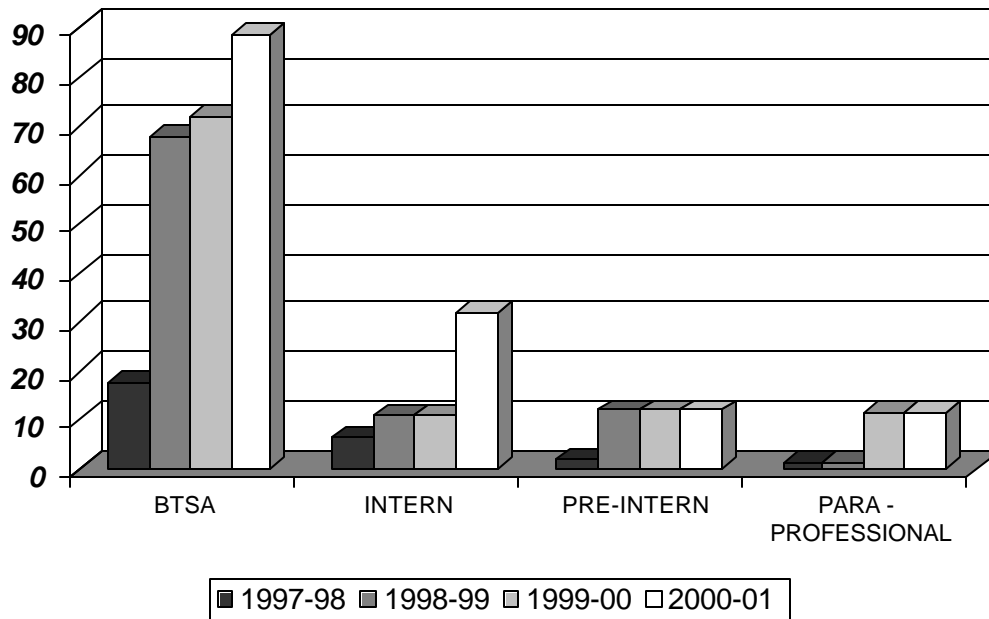


program provides scholarships to defray the costs of tuition, books and fees for college and teacher preparation. Providing systematic support, assistance, advice and financial assistance to participating paraprofessionals has lead to an astounding retention rate of 100%. To date, 253 paraprofessionals have become fully credentialed teachers. Eighty-two percent of the participants in this program are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

- The *Pre-Intern Program* places emergency permit holders into cohort groups where they receive support, assistance and advice. The focus of this strategy is targeted advice and assistance in the areas they need it the most—classroom management, lesson planning, instruction and subject matter preparation. The program has a 90% retention rate over three years (compared to 60% for Emergency Permit teachers who do not receive intensive support and assistance). Sixty-three percent of pre-interns are from underrepresented groups.
- The *Intern Program* provides on-the-job training to teachers of record across the state. Interns receive supervised, on-the-job preparation following an intensive 120-hour pre-service program. The standards for this program are the same as standards for conventional, university programs. In the current year, internship programs are operating in 43 counties and 465 school districts. The retention rate among interns has held at over 90% for the past three years. Forty-five percent of interns are members of racial and ethnic groups underrepresented in the teaching workforce.
- The *Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program (BTSA)* is working to retain teachers in all schools. BTSA provides opportunities for first and second year teachers who have completed a teacher preparation program to transition into the complex responsibilities of teaching. In the pilot program, BTSA increased retention in hard to staff schools from a national average of 50% to over 92%. The most recent data shows 94% of new teachers who participated in the BTSA Program are still teaching, with 91% still in the same district.



Teacher Preparation and Support Program Growth 1997-98 Through 2000-01 (Dollars in millions)



Why are these Programs Working?

These programs share certain common characteristics that make them successful:

- *Selection:* Candidates are specifically selected for their willingness to work in challenging schools.
- *Preparation:* Preparation is conducted in “real world” settings, to provide successful experiences with students and families.
- *Support:* Candidates are placed in cohort groups and provided extensive support and ongoing assistance.
- *Supervision:* Candidates are supervised by experienced teachers who act as mentors. These veteran teachers answer questions, offer advice and give candidates specific feedback encouraging their strengths and enabling them to target areas that need improvement.



Recent Expansion of Efforts by State Policymakers to Recruit, Prepare and Retain Qualified Teachers for all Students

California has done a great deal in the past several years to recruit, train and retain qualified teachers for all students. In addition to increases in the Paraprofessional, Pre-Intern, Intern, and BTSA programs, the Governor and Legislature have established the following programs, which are administered by agencies such as the California Department of Education and the Student Aid Commission:

- Established the *Governor's Teaching Fellowships* to attract the best and brightest individuals to classroom careers in the schools with the greatest need for qualified teachers. This program provides money to help selected teacher candidates pay living and educational expenses if they commit to teach for four years in California.
- Created the *Teachers as a Priority Block Grant* program that awards funds to low-performing schools so they may provide teacher recruitment and retention incentives at their discretion.
- Instituted a *Teacher Recruitment Initiative Program* that creates teacher recruitment centers in six regions of the state where there is a demonstrated need to aggressively recruit fully qualified teachers to the most challenging schools.
- Suspended the statutory earnings limitation for retirees who retire before January 1, 2000 in order to *encourage retired teachers to return* to the classroom, or serve as mentors for beginning teachers, particularly in the hard to staff schools with large numbers of underprepared teachers.
- Expanded the *Assumption Program of Loans for Education (APLE)* by providing education loan forgiveness for teachers who teach in critical subject matter shortage areas, schools in low-income areas and rural schools.

The Legislature and Governor Davis also approved legislation sponsored by the Commission that will make it much easier for teachers and administrators prepared in other states to obtain a California credential. Co-authored by Assemblyman Jack Scott and Senator Jack O'Connell, Assembly Bill 877 will allow California credentials to be awarded to teachers and administrators who have met equivalent requirements in another state.

AB 877 will make the recruitment and certification of teachers prepared in other states clearer, simpler and less expensive. Under this new law, credentialed teachers from other states will no longer have to complete duplicative credential requirements. California can determine that some or most of the credential requirements in teacher preparation, subject matter, and reading are met. A teacher will only have to complete the particular requirement that has not already been met.



Out-of-state prepared educators will still have their fingerprints checked by the California Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and will need to pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test. The requirements for training in the use of computers and how to work with special education students in regular settings will be deemed met, as long as the teacher has completed comparable training in another state. For the first time, the Commission will have the authority to allow out of state teachers prepared to work with English learners to receive a credential based on equivalency.

Why Credential Teachers?

Are you familiar with the age-old question about whether good teachers are born or made? I think it's both. We all know people who are wonderful with kids, people who we encourage to become teachers. But is being great with kids enough? No. It would be a disservice to the students and to the teacher to expect anyone to just step into a classroom, especially one in California today, and successfully teach. Credentialing embodies all of the elements that are so important to good teaching. What makes a good teacher?

- **Good Teachers Have a Thorough Understanding of the Subject(s) They Teach:** It is logical that teachers must first have an in-depth understanding of the content they teach to assure student achievement. Now, more than ever, with California's new academic content standards for students as well as the emphasis on accountability, teachers must be well prepared in their subject. Policy makers in California have long held that an education major in the undergraduate years would not adequately prepare teachers in subject matter content. Rather, they have felt that prospective teachers should have a degree in an academic subject. Teachers in California must either pass a rigorous examination in their subject(s) or complete an approved subject matter program.
- **Good Teachers Are Prepared to Teach to California's Student Core Content Standards:** The Commission is reviewing the academic subject matter standards for teachers. Soon all subject matter standards for teachers will be aligned with the student content standards. Teachers will be expected to know the student content standards and have the skills, knowledge, and ability to help all students achieve.
- **Good Teachers Understand How Children Learn:** All teachers are required to pass coursework and demonstrate their knowledge of development and learning. Teachers must be able to reach students of varying ages, abilities, and language and cultural backgrounds. CCTC teacher education program standards and accreditation processes ensure that all teachers know how students learn and how best to teach them.
- **Good Teachers Know Their Subject Matter and Can Communicate It to Students:** Teachers need many different strategies to help students learn. Strategies may differ according to the students' grade level and the subject area being taught. The successful teacher is one who clearly knows content and can communicate it to the students. CCTC standards and accreditation processes ensure that teacher preparation programs, whether they



are university-based or district internship programs, will continue to place an emphasis on appropriate and successful teaching tools.

- **Good Teachers Are Morally Fit:** The Commission reviews the background of all individuals who receive a credential, permit, or certificate to serve in California public schools.
- **Good Teachers Have Classroom Management Skills:** Any first-year teacher will tell you that classroom management skills are first on the list of needed skills. Teachers simply can't teach if they can't keep order in the classroom. Teacher education programs of all types offer candidates practical techniques and field experience for practicing these skills.
- **Good Teachers Get Even Better When They Receive Support:** Support and assessment in the first two years of a teacher's career not only ensure better instruction for students, but increase teacher retention by as much as forty percent.

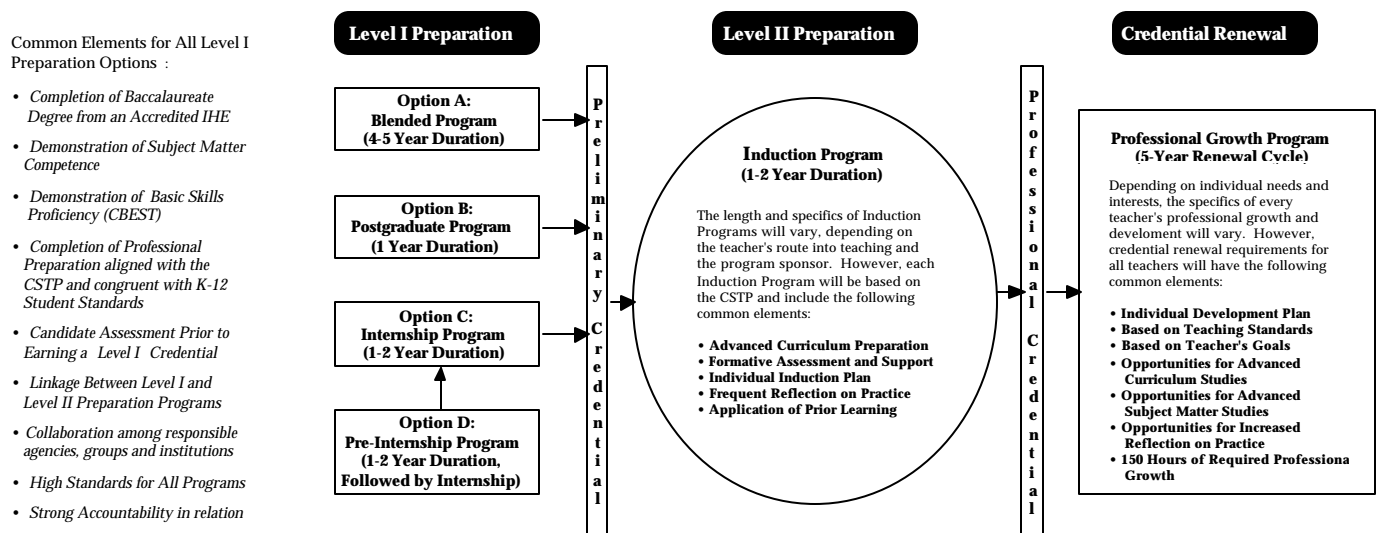


Framework for a New Credentialing System

In 1998, the Commission sponsored legislation, SB 2042 (Alpert/Mazzoni, Chapter 548, Statutes of 1998), that established a framework for reforming and restructuring the way that California prepares teachers. As you can see by the graphic below, SB 2042 established a learning-to-teach system that:

- Holds all routes into the teaching profession to the same high standards;
- Aligns standards for teacher preparation in subject matter with standards of student performance in subject matter adopted by the State Board of Education;
- Redesigns teacher preparation so that undergraduates can accelerate their preparation program by integrating, or “blending,” early K-12 classroom experiences with subject matter studies and teaching methods courses;
- Imbeds a standards-based Teaching Performance Assessment in teacher preparation programs that is aligned with K-12 student content and performance standards; and
- Provides all beginning teachers with support in their critical first years through induction.

Architecture of a New Credential System Pursuant to SB 2042 (1998)



This new system will improve teacher preparation by ensuring that all teachers have the best preparation possible before they begin teaching, that they demonstrate their competence on the required assessment before we credential them, and that all first and second year teachers have the opportunity to deepen and expand their understanding of and skill in teaching under the guidance and support of a mentor through an induction program.

Is there More California can do?

All these efforts have begun to show results but more can still be done. We recommend that policymakers:

- Build on recent efforts to improve low-performing schools by increasing the funding formulas for all new teacher programs in low-performing schools to provide a higher ratio of mentors to beginning teachers. Specify that the mentors focus on teaching, assessment and intervention based upon the core student content standards.
- Strengthen accreditation of teacher preparation programs based upon objective performance data. Strengthen accountability for teacher preparation programs found deficient based on data. Specifically, we recommend that the current accreditation system be strengthened by using objective performance data regarding: a) *teacher performance* in teaching reading and teaching to the core content standards; b) *teacher persistence*--each program's success in preparing teachers who actually go on to teach and who stay in teaching; c) *program effectiveness* based upon data from on-line interviews of program graduates regarding the effectiveness of preparation in areas such as phonics, subject matter, classroom management and working with parents. In addition, strengthen approval of undergraduate subject matter preparation programs for teachers by requiring regular reviews of programs of study designed to substitute for passage of exams, to insure alignment of these programs with the student core content standards.
- Build on the work of the reading institutes by providing grants to universities offering programs for reading specialist credentials and reading certificates to open reading clinics. Grant funding could also be directed to support supervising teachers and cooperating teachers in K-12 field settings for field experience for these credentials.
- Strengthen Education Code provisions that require all school districts to: a) recruit credentialed teachers before requesting emergency permits; b) assign teachers only after they have been fingerprinted; and c) determine that teachers are prepared in the subject they are assigned to teach.
- Provide for alternative administrator preparation programs aimed at strong leadership in hard-to-staff schools and at ensuring access to the core content standards for all students. A key element in attracting and retaining qualified teachers for hard to staff schools is a qualified, committed school leader. California can make it easier for school districts across California to recruit and prepare school administrators by providing state funding for an alternative, local preparation program modeled after the highly successful statewide teacher



internship program, which has been expanded under the Governor's leadership. Internships are less expensive than conventional programs, and tend to attract a cadre of mature and diverse professionals committed to working in hard to staff schools. Focus the content of the program on:

1. knowledge of the State Board adopted student performance standards in core content areas;
 2. teaching to the core content standards;
 3. assessing students relative to the core content standards;
 4. using state-adopted textbooks and instructional materials that support student mastery of the core content standards.
- Expand the Governor's Teaching Fellowship, which will increase the pool of teachers who are trained *before* they enter a classroom.

In conclusion, we have several challenges facing us today. It is crucial that California continue to address the shortage of qualified teachers for all students. Working together, California policymakers can assure that every child in our state has a teacher they will always remember.

